



M E M O R A N D U M

Date: June 09, 2016

To: Board of Park Commissioners

From: Robert Stowers, Interim Director, Parks Division, Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR)

Subject: Reimplementation of SPR's Inspection Program (SPIP) Proposal

Requested Board Action:

The purpose of this briefing is to inform the Board of Park Commissioners about the history of the Seattle Parks and Recreation Inspection Program (SPIP) and request your thoughts on our recommendations to update the program to strengthen and improve the SPIP work that was done in 2001.

Brief History and Description of Program:

The Park Inspection Program was developed and implemented in 2001 to help SPR meet the City's goals for clean, safe, and well maintained parks. It was also intended to be an internal quality control system, ensuring that SPR resources were allocated appropriately and that parks were maintained at acceptable standards. The program required SPR staff to conduct field work and evaluate the condition of our parks. The results from these field inspections were collected, compiled, and prioritized into maintenance and job work orders that staff were assigned complete.

Issues for Discussion: Past Program Issues/Concerns:

The initial program, while important in the overall evaluation of park conditions, was a labor intensive process that involved a lot of paperwork, resulting in a slow turnaround time to identify and correct problems. Challenges from the 2001 process included:

- Inspections were based solely on the points and the rating system presented in this report. Observations and ratings made were often inconsistent with the actual condition of the park assets.
- There was inconsistency in the level of training and knowledge of the volunteers conducting the inspections.
- Strategies needed to be developed to recruit, train, manage, and retain a volunteer citizen base.
- The random selection of sites for inspection resulted in multiple sites being inspected several times a year and, and other sites not being inspected for years.

- The system was primarily SPR driven and lacked adequate citizen participation.

Due to these issues and other department priorities, this program was discontinued in 2010.

Current Program Proposal and Recommendations:

SPR staff has developed a new SPIP which will address past program challenges. The new inspection program will have two components:

1. Bi-weekly inspections of sites selected by Parks Crew Chiefs and volunteers from local communities;
2. Quarterly tours, led by the Park Resource Manager, with members of the Board of Park Commissioners, Council and/or Mayoral staff, and other interested stakeholders.

The additional citizen participation, involvement of SPR management, elected officials, and community based organizations, will ensure a broader level of assessment tools for evaluating the conditions of Seattle Parks.

Public Involvement Process:

Once we receive approval from the Superintendent to move forward with SPR's SPIP proposal, staff will begin outreach to community partners, volunteers, advisory groups, elected officials, and underrepresented communities about this program to ensure a balanced and representative team of evaluators.

Schedule: Program implementation will begin in the fall of 2016, after the summer peak season

Additional Information:

Robert Stowers: Robert.stowers@seattle.gov 684-8012